

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1        1. A system for tracking descriptive information
- 2        about a changeable article:
  - 3            a machine-readable label (MRL) attachable to
  - 4            articles;
  - 5            one or more processors connectable to a MRL
  - 6            reader and programmed to create an association between data
  - 7            stored in an MRL with particular data describing a given
  - 8            article and store said association in a data store;
  - 9            said particular data including a changeable
  - 10          characteristic of said given article;
  - 11          said one or more processors being programmed to
  - 12          scan said MRL and permit a user to complete a transaction
  - 13          involving said given article including reading said
  - 14          particular data in said data store, said transaction being
  - 15          responsive to said particular data.
- 1        2. A system as in claim 1, wherein said one or
- 2        more processors are programmed to accept update data
- 3        indicating a change in said given article and to update
- 4        said data describing said given article such that when said
- 5        one or more processors scan said MRL and permit said user
- 6        to complete a further transaction involving said given

7 article, said transaction is responsive to change in said  
8 given article.

1 3. A system as in claim 2, wherein said change is  
2 a change of quantity of a material of said article.

1 4. A system as in claim 1, wherein said data  
2 describing said given article includes a quantity of a  
3 material of said article.

1 5. A system as in claim 1, wherein said one or  
2 more processors are connectable to be controlled at a  
3 terminal such that a maker of said article can at least  
4 partially create said data describing said given article by  
5 inputting data into said terminal.

1 6. A system as in claim 1, further comprising a  
2 scale including a MRL reader, wherein said one or more  
3 processors are programmed to accept update data from said  
4 scale, said update data including a change in weight of  
5 said given article.

1 7. A system as in claim 1, further comprising a  
2 device for measuring a change in said given article, said  
3 device including a MRL reader, wherein said one or more  
4 processors are programmed to accept update data from said  
5 device, said update data including a change in said given  
6 article measured by said device.

1           8. A method for tracking descriptive information  
2   about a changeable article, comprising the steps of:  
3           attaching a machine-readable label (MRL) to an  
4   article;  
5           said MRL having a unique code;  
6           at a retail establishment, storing a correlation  
7   between descriptive information about said article and said  
8   unique code in a data store; and  
9           reading said unique code at a location other than  
10   said retail establishment to obtain at least a portion of  
11   said descriptive information using said correlation in said  
12   data store.

1           9. A method as in claim 8, wherein said  
2   descriptive information includes an initial quantity or  
3   size of said article.

1           10. A method as in claim 8, further comprising  
2   the step of reading said unique code and looking up said  
3   correlation responsively to said unique code at a location  
4   other than said retail establishment and modifying at least  
5   a portion of said descriptive information responsively to  
6   said correlation in said data store.

1           11. A method as in claim 10, wherein said  
2   descriptive information includes an initial quantity or  
3   size of said article.

1           12. A method as in claim 8, wherein said  
2 correlation in said data store is automatically deleted  
3 responsively to one or more predetermined events.

1           13. A method as in claim 12, wherein said one or  
2 more predetermined events includes the passage of a  
3 predetermined period of time after said step of storing a  
4 correlation.

1           14. A method for tracking descriptive  
2 information about a changeable article, comprising the  
3 steps of:

4                 attaching a machine-readable label (MRL) to an  
5 article;

6                 said MRL having a unique code;

7                 storing a correlation between descriptive  
8 information about said article and said unique code in a  
9 data store; and

10               reading said unique code to obtain at least a  
11 portion of said descriptive information using said  
12 correlation in said data store;

13               deleting said correlation after the passage of a  
14 predetermined period of time after said step of storing.

1           15. A method as in claim 14, wherein said  
2 descriptive information includes an initial quantity or  
3 size of said article.

1           16. A method as in claim 14, further comprising  
2       the step of reading said unique code, looking up said  
3       correlation responsively to said unique code, and modifying  
4       at least a portion of said descriptive information  
5       responsively to said correlation in said data store.

1           17. A method as in claim 16, wherein said  
2       descriptive information includes an initial quantity or  
3       size of said article.